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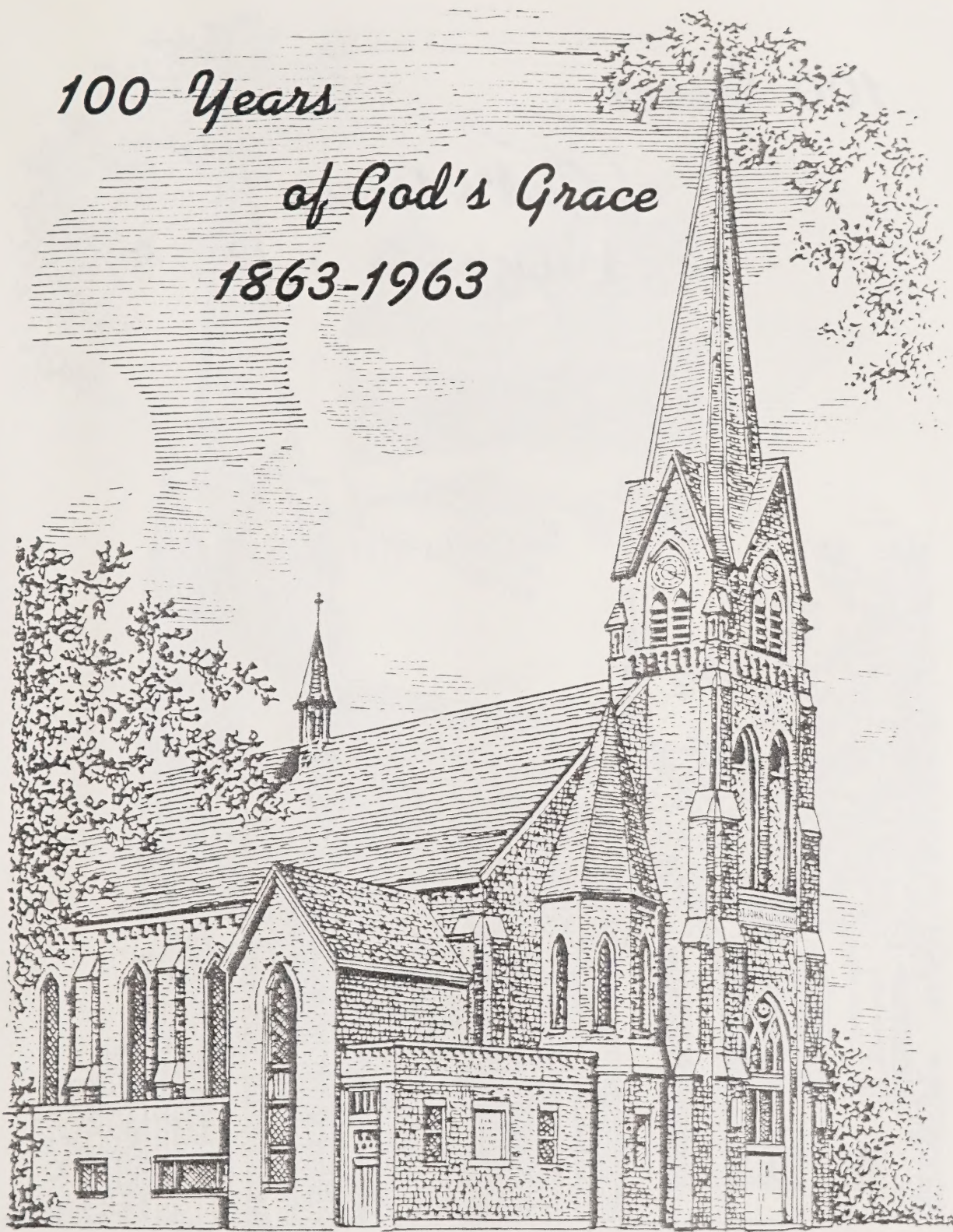
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100 years of God's grace,
1863-1963

100 Years

of God's Grace

1863-1963



St. John's Lutheran Church ~ Two Rivers, Wisconsin

100 Years

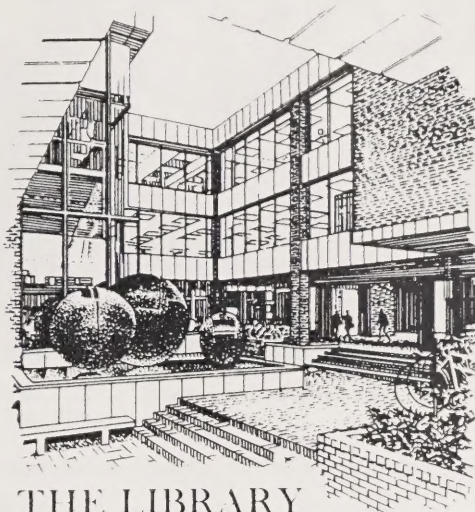
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St. John's Lutheran Church ~ Two Rivers, Wisconsin



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Martin Busse Organist and Choir Director

Elda Schmeichel Organist and Choir Accompanist

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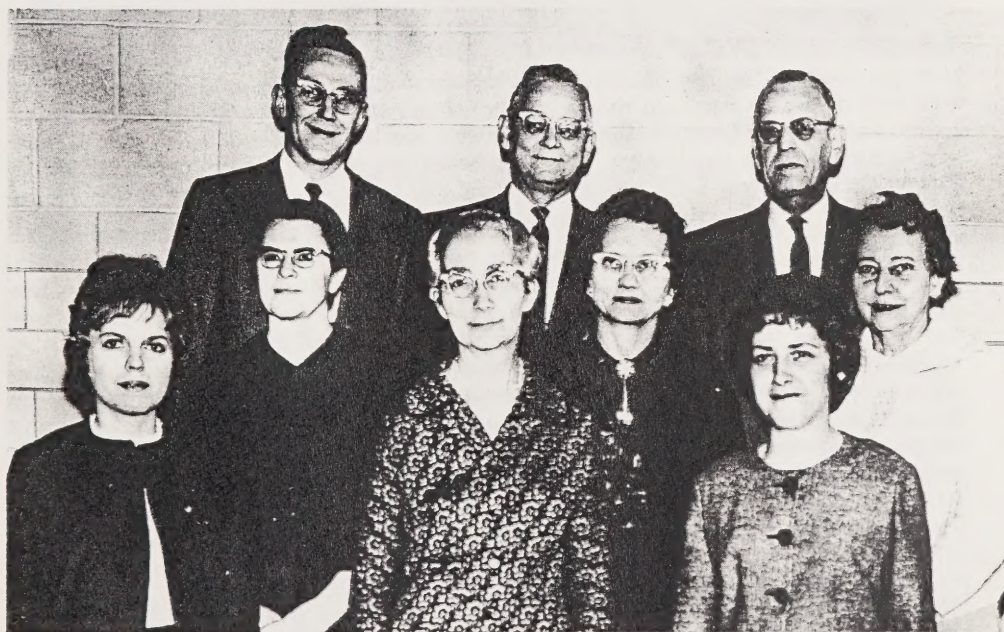
Present Church Council



Back Row L to R: LeRoy Strye, Glenn Stegeman, Leslie Guetschow, Franklin Oestreich, William Steinbrecher, Pastor Theodore Stern.

Front Row L to R: Roland Meyer, Eldon Sonntag, Leland Stoer, Reine Gleichner.

Present School Faculty



Back Row L to R: Arnold Heyer, Principal Emil Leitzke, Martin Busse.

Center Row L to R: Clara Schwake, Frances Sonntag, Lily Arneman.

Front Row L to R: Betty Lou Dobratz, Elaine Zermuehlen, Maryanne Mitzenheim.

History of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation of Two Rivers and Vicinity

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Ps. 126, 3. For one hundred years our Lord Jesus Christ has been doing His Work of saving souls for eternity in our midst. Our joy and praise on the occasion of this milestone of mercy is being expressed in many different ways, as will be detailed at the end of this historical account. Here suffice it to say that the entire publication of this booklet with its histories, lists and pictures is but another way in which we want to show our thankfulness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for establishing and maintaining the Means of Grace here at St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church for 100 years.

"Unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." This is the purpose of all that is written and portrayed in this Anniversary booklet. No amount of words can adequately express either the work He has done nor our gratitude for it. Our pen is too feeble to record the mighty acts of God; our tongue too thick to trumpet forth His praise. Certainly our records will pass over far too lightly many a momentous event which transpired the past 100 years, but if our brief sketch stimulates the memory of God's children here to ponder His mercy which has been made known in the history of our congregation, our efforts will not have been in vain. Here then are a few lines to review what took place the past 100 years.

First Services Held in 1855

Lutheran Services were held in the Two Rivers area as early as 1855 by Pastor C. F. Goldammer who had come to serve a group of residents in the town of Newton four years previously. The Two Rivers locality being sparsely settled at this time, services were held in private homes in the vicinity which is now known as Shoto. One of those homes was that of Irwin Wilke, who became one of the founders of our present congregation. Pastor Goldammer also established the First German congregation in Manitowoc in the year 1855 and accepted the call to be its first pastor. Pastor Philip Koehler came to this congregation in Manitowoc in the year 1858 and also continued to serve the Two Rivers people.

Emmanuel — God With Us

At a site about three miles up the East Twin River a tannery flourished at this time and a village grew up around it. Here services were conducted in a school house by Pastor Koehler as early as 1858. The Lutherans of Two Rivers journeyed to this village by boat up the river or on foot through the woods. On September 9, 1860 the people who gathered around the Word and Sacrament in this village organized a congregation and fittingly called it "Emmanuel Congregation" for Emmanuel means—God is with us. Through November 1862 Pastor Koehler performed 35 baptisms at Emmanuel Congregation, which is certainly an indication of the size of the gatherings which took place here, and also accounts for the hopes of a permanent church at this site. Shortly after 31 persons signed the constitution of this newly formed parish land was purchased and part of it was plotted for a cemetery. However, already when St. Johns congregation celebrated its 50th Anniversary neither the Tannery nor the village were any longer in existence, although the area is still spoken of in 1963 as the Tannery area in which there is a Tannery road and a Tannery bridge, and the cemetery is still intact.

St. Johns Organized

Pastor Koehler later began preaching in the village of Two Rivers because the German Lutherans here wanted a pastor and a church of their own, and on Feb. 1, 1863 our St. Johns church was organized. Through Pastor Koehler's efforts Pastor H. Bartelt followed the call to this newly established congregation in Two Rivers and was installed as the first pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran St. Johns Church of Two Rivers and vicinity. The establishment of this congregation and the ordination of Pastor Bartelt was sanctioned by the Wisconsin Synod which met that year, 1863, from May 29 to June 3, as is indicated in the official proceedings of that body. Thus were begun the regular and uninterrupted services of St. Johns Lutheran Congregation, which by God's Grace have continued to this present day.



Our First Church. Later Remodeled for Our Christian Day School

First Location Smith's Meeting House

The first services were held by Pastor Bartelt in what was then known as "Smith's meeting House," located on Washington Street between 15th and 16th Streets. This building had been built already in 1857 and had served many years as a gathering place for the Congregationalists. Not too far away from this place, namely on the site of our present church, St. Paul's Episcopal church, erected in 1856, was lying idle due to the loss of members during the Civil war. On May 14, 1864 this building was purchased and rearranged for Lutheran Services. When this building at its fine location was acquired, the Emmanuel Congregation at the Tannery disbanded and its members affiliated with St. Johns. The Tannery Cemetery, however, was held and managed by interested individuals and still functions as a private cemetery at its original location. These events of course swelled the membership of the new German Lutheran church so that after two and one half years Pastor Bartelt reported a membership of 74 families and 10 widowed members.

Pastor Carl Braun Continues Work

Pastor Carl Braun accepted the call on May 14, 1866 to succeed the first pastor who heeded a call to serve elsewhere. Pastor Braun was called at a yearly salary of \$450 with free rent. The congregation was striving to reduce its indebtedness and asked their pastor to make appeals to sister congregations for help. Due to his untiring efforts and the generosity of sister congregations in the Wisconsin Synod the debt was finally

liquidated and it was possible to raise the pastor's salary to \$500. But for this large salary pastor Braun was not only to look after the work in the congregation. He was also specifically called to be the teacher of the school which had been started while Pastor Bartelt was here. The directions laid down in the minutes of the congregational meeting clearly show the concern of these early Christians for the training of their children. For they were to be taught in all learning eleven months of the year, four days a week and 5 hours each day. Outside of these hours Confirmation classes were to be conducted. It was the purpose of the congregation at this time to engage a full time teacher. However this was not possible, but the school program of studies was clearly established and ably carried out by Pastor Braun.

Pastor Carl Zuberbier Installed in 1869

In April of 1868 Pastor Braun took ill and on January 10, 1869 he died. During the vacancy due to Pastor Braun's illness Pastor Quehl of Manitowoc served the congregation. Upon the recommendation of President Bading of the Wisconsin Synod, Pastor Carl Zuberbier was called and installed in October of 1869. It was the Lord's will to call him into the church triumphant after only three years of labor here at St. Johns. He was buried on June 16, 1872 on a cemetery plot purchased by the congregation and his widow was given a stipend of \$20 per month for an indefinite period of time. Tho his labors were of short duration the records of the congregation indicate substantial internal growth during Pastor Zuberbier's ministry. For the first time joint mission festival services were held with the sister church at Manitowoc; regular and sizeable offerings were gathered for missions and synod and for the first time in the young church's history the treasury of the church showed a balance at the end of the year.

First Teacher Installed

The Lord however did not forget His little flock when He called their shepherd to Himself in heaven. By August of 1872 St. Johns was again being served by a faithful pastor in the person of Conrad Jaeger under whose able leadership a clear confession was made overagainst the soul destroying religion of the lodge. While the agonies of this conflict were severe it resulted in great blessings for the congregation, for it was found possible now to engage the first full time teacher in the school and also to purchase a pipe organ. It was with deep feelings of regret that our congregation gave Pastor Jaeger a release to serve in a larger field at the beginning of the year 1878, for the deep and consecrated spiritual leadership which he had given the congregation in his five year stay had brought him close to the hearts of his hearers.

Present Church Planned

In April of 1878 Pastor Phi. Lucas was installed. He was afflicted with constant illness during his ministry here, yet he labored with faithfulness for more than three full years. When he died in the fall of 1881 he was laid to rest on the congregation's plot next to Pastor Zuberbier.

Thereupon it was the privilege of the congregation to be served for seven years by the son of its founder. Pastor John Ph. Koehler came in December 1881. During his ministry which was of longer duration than any of his predecessors the congregation grew both inwardly and outwardly. With the purchase of a church bell in 1885 the physical facilities of the congregation seemed to have been completed. But due to a substantial migration of German immigrants at this time it was soon found that the congregations facilities were inadequate. When in 1888 we hear that our forefathers decided to build a suitable and spacious church we can not overlook the fact that this decision was the result of inward spiritual growth. Methods of financing consisted in all the members bringing sacrificial gifts of love so that the plans by Architect Schnetzke of Milwaukee who developed the suggestions of Pastor Koehler could be adequately executed.

The Church Built

It caused no little disturbance when in the midst of this building program Pastor Koehler accepted a call as professor at Watertown. The Lord's hand in this project however can be seen in immediately providing the congregation with a capable shepherd in the person of Pastor A. F. Siegler who took hold of the project with a firm hand and saw it completed in the year 1890. The erection of this massive edifice so early in the history of Two Rivers is a standing testimony of the faith and love of the early members of our congregation. While it was a busy time it was also a happy time. There are still living members of our congregation who remember bringing rocks from far for the foundations; supplying teams of horses for the excavations; raising the bell and dedicating this church to the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ. When the church was completed a second class room was also added to the school, which was flourishing with the progress of the church. Just five years before the new church was dedicated the Lord of the Church had given our congregation a teacher who still lives in the memory of many. It was in 1885 that Mr. B. J. Wetzel began his 33 years of service here. One year after the new church was dedicated, Miss Clara Saubert was engaged to teach the second class room for three years, thereupon being succeeded by Miss Tina Damler.



1890: The long white building was the public high school. The building to the left facing the street was the parsonage (now located on Adams Street). The next building is unidentified. The white building to the left of the church was the school building which was remodeled from the first church building.

Pastor Christian Doehler Comes in 1892



Pastor Christian Doehler

But by this time there had been another change in the pastorate. Pastor Siegler accepted a call to Norfolk, Nebraska, and was succeeded on Sept. 4, 1892 by Pastor Christian Doehler. During the 28 years of his faithful ministry St. Johns congregation grew into full adulthood. The debt on the church building was retired without much trouble. But when the church was built the parsonage had been removed and the old church had been remodeled into a larger school. The work of building the present parsonage was taken up at once and it was completed for \$2,600 in the year 1895 and stands today as an example of the thoughtfulness, zeal, and diligence with which our forebears looked after the work of the Lord.

School and Parsonage Built

Under Pastor Doehler's direction the Ladies Aid was organized, the Lutheran Men's Club was begun and the school flourished to such an extent that the congregation determined to build a four room school which was completed for \$10,020 in 1905. Eight years later the congregation celebrated its 50th Anniversary at which time a booklet was published in German which to this day is the only accurate record of the history of our church before that time. Up until this time St. Johns was a German church. It had been begun by people of German extraction and all its work was done through the medium of the German language. But after 50 years the fact that it was in America and not in Germany began to tell. The Lord gave His Gospel not only to be kept, but also to be spread. It was His will therefore that the message of the Savior which came here in the German language should also be made known in the English language. He wanted us, who are living today, to have it too. But we didn't get it without the work, sweat and pain of those who went before. During Pastor Doehler's ministry English services and instructions were begun, the labors in connection with which were so arduous and strenuous, that pastor Doehler found it necessary to resign in 1920 having served his Lord faithfully by giving his strength in serving the congregation that was here then, and also by sowing the seed which has made it possible for us to continue receiving God's blessing in our congregation now in the English language.

*The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word;
From heav'n He came and sought
her to be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought
Her. And for her life He died.*

*Elect from ev-ry nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With ev'ry grace endued.*



Present School Built in 1905, Completely Remodeled in 1955



Present Parsonage Built in 1895

Pastor Walter G. Haase Accepts Call May 1920



Pastor Walter G. Haase

Pastor W. G. Haase was installed in May of 1920. It was a disturbed and troubled congregation to which Pastor Haase came and the Lord had given him the gift to sooth the troubled waters. With diligence and quietness he went about his work which the Lord gave him strength to do for 41 years, the longest any pastor has served our congregation. During his ministry the church was redecorated in preparation for celebrating the 75th anniversary in 1938; our school was enlarged and renovated in 1955 and he was with us yet when we entered our remodeled church in 1960. The church grew in these years, not without troubles, but inspite of them, as the faithful shepherd of our Lord gently led the flock. In 1943 the congregation was disturbed by inroads made into its work by the United

Lutheran church which established an opposition altar only a few blocks away. Ten years later a similar difficulty was overcome by taking part in establishing a sister congregation on the North side of town.

When two English services were necessary in addition to the one German service, which was continued until 1958, assistance was obtained in the persons of Pastors Bussewitz (1937-1938); George Barthels (1938-1939); Kurth Hinnenthal (1938-1939); Roland Ehlke (1940-1948); Fred Zarling (1949-1955); Nathan Retzlaff (1955-1956). Emil Leitzke came to be the principal of our school in 1928 and under his capable direction the Christian Day School that was started when our congregation was founded has grown to 300 pupils in nine class rooms. Since 1956 our congregation has been assisting in maintaining the Manitowoc Conference Lutheran High School together with our sister congregations in this area. A complete list of teachers as well as a chronological list of events will be found elsewhere in this 100th Anniversary booklet which may be compared with this historical account to gain a more complete picture of the congregation's life.

*'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And soon the Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.*

*Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won;
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee.*

Pastor Theodore Stern Installed in 1956



Pastor Theodore Stern

Pastor Theodore Stern who is now serving us, was installed in Oct. 1956. Under his guidance our church facilities were completely remodeled in preparation for the celebration of this 100th Anniversary. The balconies were removed from the side and the back balcony was extended. A church office was added. The entire church was underpinned and the excavations made provided toilet facilities, the Fellowship Hall and a kitchen. New chancel furniture and pews were purchased. Extensive public address system throughout the building is used daily. Electric bell ringers, a completely new heating system and electrical wiring and lighting system were all installed at a total cost of \$170,000. In 1961 the kitchen in the parsonage was remodeled and new electric wiring installed, so that as we

celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our congregation we can look upon the facilities of our church as being up to date. We must certainly appreciate what we have inherited from those who went before, but we can also be thankful for the opportunity given us to improve what was here, and by our labors and sacrifices to make it our own to pass on to the generations yet to come. It is hoped that during this centennial year the debt on our property of about \$19,000 will be erased by the thankful, willing gifts of all our members.

Assistance in the ministry has been supplied by Eugene Ahlswede (1961-62) and Daniel Westendorf (1962-63) both from our Theological Seminary at Thiensville, Wisconsin, which institution of our church is also celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year.

Source of Historical Events

Reference is here being made to four publications which together with this one contain all the written historical information available on our congregation. They are: 1. The Fiftieth Anniversary booklet published in German. 2. The 75th Anniversary booklet published in English. 3. The dedication booklet on the addition and remodeling of our Christian Day School published in 1955. 4. The dedication Service booklet published for the dedication of our church on May 22, 1960.

Sons of Congregation Members Who Entered Ministry

We wish to mention the following sons from our congregation who have in the past entered the ministry. They are: A. F. Nicolous, Fred Koch, Henry Koch, Henry Schmitt, Henry Hopp, Harvey Kahrs, Walter Tabbert, Albert Albrecht, Alvin Kienetz and John Johannes. The following have in the past prepared themselves for teaching in Christian Day schools while they were members of our congregation. Rudolph Jens, Elizabeth Tabbert, Elizabeth Johannes, Joyce Pautz, Joan and Lois Vertz and Judith Engelland. At present Karen Jenkins, Jane Schwake, Herbert Wolff, Robert Wolff and Roger Peters are preparing for work in the church.

100th Anniversary Guest Preachers

The Celebration of our 100th Anniversary is taking place in the year 1963 from April 28 through June 9. The following sons of our congregation will take part in these celebrations: Pastors Albert Albrecht, Alvin Kienetz, Walter Tabbert and Harvey Kahrs.

On June 9, 1963 Pastor Ehlke and Pastor Zarling will take part in the festive celebrations for which the Ladies of our congregation will also provide a meal and a reception. During the month long celebration the mixed Choir and junior choir will enhance the services and a special organ concert especially prepared for emphasizing the 100 years of blessings come to us in song will be enjoyed.

Our Prayer of Thanksgiving

May we then in looking over the past and taking part in the present lift our hearts in thankful praise to our Savior Jesus Christ and both in word and work declare: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

Teachers Who Served St. John's Congregation

1863-1865 Pastor H. Bartelt
1866-1868 Pastor Carl Braun
1869-1872 Pastor Carl Zuberbier
1873-1875 Mr. Pautz
1875-1883 Mr. A. Haise
1884-1885 Mr. Karbaum
1885-1918 Mr. B. J. Wetzel
1891-1894 Clara Saubert
1894-1927 Tina Damler
1900-1902 Anna Schmitt
1902-1903 Ida Saubert
1903-1904 William Boette
1905-1906 William Manthey
1918-1922 Louis Pingel
1922-1923 Erna Gehm
1923-1927 Arthur Kurth
1923-1925 Elmer Kuehn
1925-1927 Frances Ebert
1927-1942 SeVera Sauer
1927-1928 Leona Krubsack
1927-1930 Erich Kirschke
1928-1937 Zelma Hill

1928- Emil Leitzke
1930- Martin Busse
1937-1945 Ruth Uhlig
1943-1945 Verna Birkholz
1946-1950 Loretta Krenz
1946-1948 Henrietta Zessin
1947- Frances Sonntag
1950-1954 Vera Mae Krenz
1952-1956 Paul Kock
1952-1953 Mrs. Mort Saunders
1953-1954 Bernice Leinwander
1954- Mrs. Elmer Arneman
1954-1956 Joan Vertz
1954- Mrs. Bernard Schwake
1955-1956 Yvonne Pieper
1956-1957 Rose Wissenbaugh
1957- Arnold Heyer
1957- Mrs. Elaine Zermuehlen
1957-1960 Beverlee Haar
1960- Maryanne Mitzenheim
1961-1962 Carol Jira
1962- Betty Lou Dobratz

Interior Church Views Before 1960



Inside Looking Toward Altar



Inside Looking to Rear

Interior Church Views After 1960



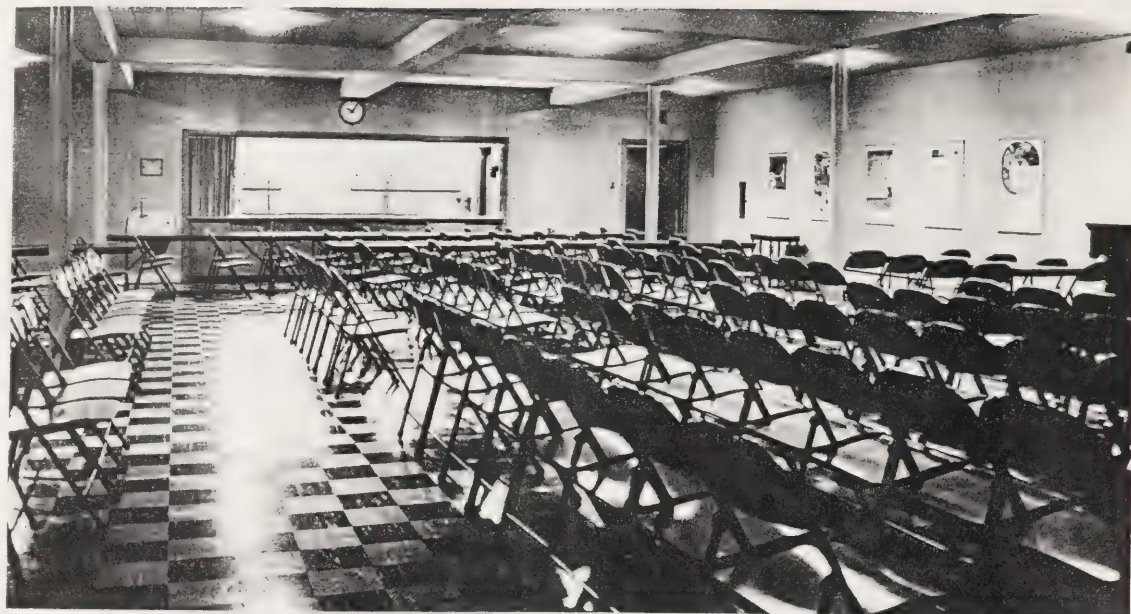
Inside Looking Toward Altar



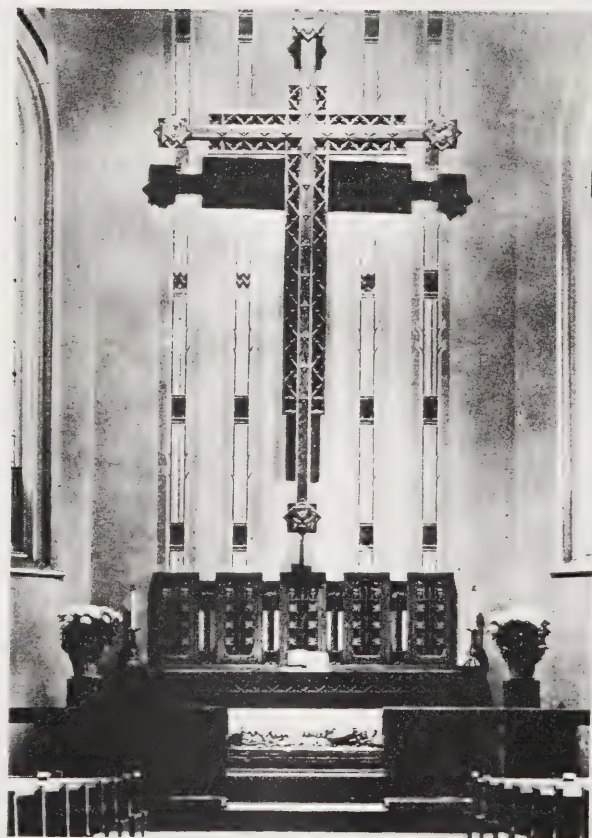
Inside Looking to Rear

Events As They Transpired Through The 100 Years At St. John's Lutheran Church

- 1863 Congregation organized. Pastor Bartelt installed.
- 1864 Bought Episcopal Church building and property which was used as church until 1890 and then as school until 1905.
- 1865 74 voting members listed.
- 1866 Congregation joins the Wisconsin Synod. Pastor Braun installed. Combination school and parsonage built for \$1518.
- 1868 Pastor Braun died.
- 1869 Pastor Zuberbier installed.
- 1872 Pastor Zuberbier died. Pastor Jaeger installed.
- 1873 First full time teacher, Mr. Pautz, installed.
- 1875 Bought first pipe organ.
- 1877 Pastor Jaeger left.
- 1878 Pastor Ph. Lucas installed.
- 1881 Pastor Lucas died. Pastor J. P. Koehler installed.
- 1885 Bought first bell.
- 1888 Decided to build new church. 94 children in school. Pastor Koehler left. Pastor A. Siegler installed.
- 1889 Started to build present church building. Moved first parsonage to 1920 Adams St.
- 1890 Dedicated present church building which cost \$10,000.
- 1891 Second class room added in school.
- 1892 Pastor Siegler left. Pastor Christian Doehler installed.
- 1895 Present parsonage built for \$2,600.
- 1900 Third class room added in school.
- 1902 Women of congregation established the Ladies Aid.
- 1905 New school built for \$10,020. The enrollment of school 160. Moved first church, which was being used as school to 1708 - 20th St. Lutheran Men's Club started.
- 1913 Celebrated 50th Anniversary. Published history of congregation. Debt on buildings, \$3,750. Statistics: 175 married couples; 11 widows and 226 voting members.
- 1918 First English confirmation class.
- 1920 Pastor Doehler left. Pastor W. Haase installed.
- 1921 Last German Confirmation class. New pipe organ purchased.
- 1923 Dorcas Society started.
- 1924 Frame teacherage purchased for \$4,500.
- 1928 Teacher Emil Leitzke installed.
- 1929 Decided to build new parsonage but never carried out.
- 1930 Teacher Martin Busse installed.
- 1937 Pastor Bussewitz installed. Ladies Bible Study group begun.
- 1938 Three services instituted; One German and two English. Celebrated 75th Anniversary. Pastor Barthels installed.
- 1939 School remodeling plans begun. Pastor Hinnenthal installed.
- 1940 Pastor Ehlke installed.
- 1941 New Hymnals acquired.
- 1944 Nominating for officers put into the hands of a committee.
- 1946 Devotional booklets distributed for the first time.
- 1947 Teacher Mrs. Leo Sonntag installed.
- 1948 Bought property on North Side.
- 1949 Pastor Zarling installed.
- 1950 Couples Club begun.
- 1951 5th class room added to school.
- 1952 Allen Organ purchased. Permission granted to start Our Savior's Congregation on North Side. Decided to renovate school.
- 1953 Our Savior's Church started.
- 1954 6th class room added to school. Mrs. B. Schwake and Mrs. E. Arneman installed. Weekly Sunday bulletins started.
- 1955 North End Property sold. Nathan Retzlaff installed as vicar. Remodeled school dedicated.
- 1956 Establishment of Lutheran High School considered. Pastor Stern installed.
- 1957 7th and 8th class rooms added. Mr. Heyer and Mrs. Zermuehlen installed. Pioneers started.
- 1958 Discontinued German services.
- 1959 Decided to remodel church. Quorum rule changed to members present.
- 1960 Dedicated church which was remodeled for \$170,000. Miss Mitzenheim installed. Pastor Haase retired.
- 1961 Joint Ladies Society begun. 9th class room added to school. Pastor Haase died.
- 1962 New roof on parsonage. Miss Dobratz installed. Every member visiting started. Statistics: 1487 Communicant members and 543 children.
- 1963 Celebrating 100 years of God's blessings.



Present Fellowship Hall



Our Altar

Church Societies



Ladies Bible Class



Men's Bible Class



Mixed Chorus



Ladies Afternoon Group

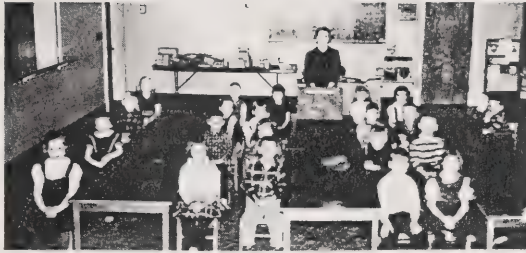


Lutheran Men's Club



Ladies Evening Group

Our Christian Day School



Kindergarten



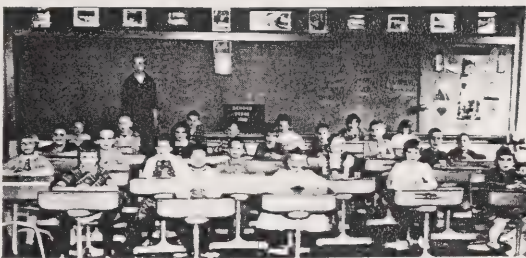
5th Grade



1st Grade



6th Grade



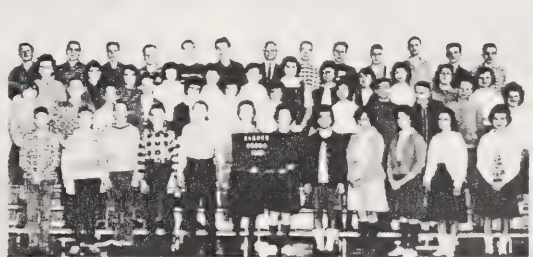
2nd Grade



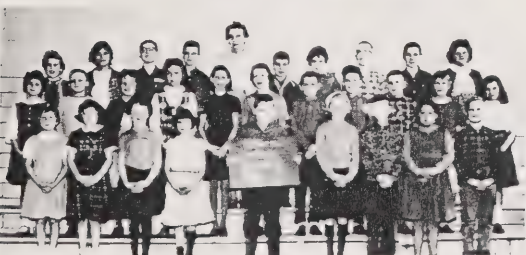
7th Grade



3rd Grade



8th Grade



4th Grade



100th Confirmation Class



High School Student Bible Class



Sunday School Teachers



Stewardship Visitors



Girl Pioneers



Boy Pioneers



Dart Ball



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